

20 Years Later: New War Clouds

By Drew Pearson

Twenty years ago today, the great German army began to surrender. Its mechanized might had ridden roughshod over Poland, Belgium, Holland, France like a giant bulldozer pushing through shanty town. It had spread out over the plains of Russia, rippled south as far as Stalingrad, engulfed the Balkans, and crossed the Mediterranean to fan out over the deserts of North Africa.

But on May 4, 1945, German soldiers, knowing the end was a matter of hours, began to lay down their rifles. At the River Elbe, Russian and American troops had met, shaken hands, drunk a toast for peace. A war which for Europe had begun almost six years before was over.

On that day, 20 years ago, I was in San Francisco, along with many other newsmen, watching the leaders of the Allied world build an edifice for peace. On the whole they built well. One foundation stone of their building was discussion—the vital importance of bringing two quarreling nations before an assembly of peace and requiring them to thresh out their differences.



Pearson

in public before their critical fellow United Nations representatives.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, ordinarily a thoughtful, common-sense diplomat, has discouraged congressional criticism of the Administration's war policies. He accuses his critics of "gullibility," "nonsense," and "stubborn disregard of plain facts." President Johnson, in his latest press conference, did not agree. He said it was unfair to label all critics as appeasers and to discourage "honest, forthright discussion."

LBJ Is Right

I agree with President Johnson. Not only was the United Nations founded for the purpose of free and open discussion, but the Constitution of the United States requires that a declaration of war must be debated and voted by Congress.

In most previous threats of war, Americans had no opportunity to look down the track, see the locomotive of war bearing down on them in time to avoid collision.

In Korea, the attack occurred overnight. At Pearl Harbor the American people woke up on a Sunday morning to find their fleet sunk. True, events leading up to those tragedies, especially Pearl Harbor, gave indication that war was coming.

But in the current crisis in

Viet-Nam, this so-called "brush-fire" or isolated war has dragged on for 18 years. We have had time to diagnose it, analyze it, determine whether we want it to drift into world war.

This drift is dangerous. Never in the 20 years since the German army began surrendering has there been such a danger of war, such dire need to head off world war.

In the Middle East, Pakistan and India are engaged in minor skirmishes which could become major war—with both sides using American weapons. The United States has poured around \$4 million in weapons and aid into Pakistan, even though we knew she had designs on her neighbor. More recently we have poured lesser amounts in arms into the arsenals of her neighbor.

Flood of U.S. Arms

In the Dominican Republic, two revolutionary groups are firing at each other with so many American arms that the U.S. Government which furnished those arms has had to send U.S. Marines to rescue its citizens. For years under dictator Trujillo we poured arms into the Dominican Republic.

On the island of Cyprus, two of our allies, Greece and Turkey, have been at each other's throats, again with both sides using American

arms. American jet fighters, given to the Turks, have flown over Cyprus, strafing Greek Cypriots below.

In Viet-Nam, we have armed all of the South and, indirectly, part of the North.

Yet the arms race and the alliance between big defense contractors and the big military, which President Eisenhower warned against, goes on; with President Johnson recently appointing Adm. William Raborn, vice president of the giant Aerojet defense complex to be the Administration's eyes and ears as head of Central Intelligence.

Last week, the State Department gave a secret OK to two other arms shipments—one to Jordan on the border of Israel, the other to Saudi Arabia for \$200 million worth of supersonic fighters and anti-aircraft missiles. The transactions have been very secret and not supposed to be known but, despite Dean Rusk's objection to criticism, I think the public has a right to know about them. These are arms which later might help to precipitate war.

Arms are not the only reason why war threatens in various parts of the world today. There are other reasons—vital, difficult reasons, as will be reported in future columns on the 20th anniversary of the ending of World War II in Europe.

© 1965, Bell-McClure Syndicate, Inc.